

More from the Gateways

Introduction

Following the publication of the original material “Gateways”, I have had a chance to teach and speak to many people about this concept. As a result of their many questions and comments, I have written “More from the gateways”, in an attempt to move our understanding on. There is much we still do not understand, but it seems that the “gateways” concept is helping some people begin to pray more consistently and effectively for nations, which must be good for the world. In this material, I have tried to take lessons from various gateways, and help us apply them in our prayers. Where necessary, I have quoted from the original gateways material.

Part 1: How to learn from the gateways

*** They encourage prayer for nations**

Istanbul

“I visited Hagia Sophia during my first trip to Turkey. I had expected a place of great power, but found a place of no power. Then the Lord said to me. “Now you understand, come into the gateway and see.” I looked, and I was shocked by what I saw. No one was there! Everywhere I looked, I saw desolation, desert, barrenness, dry and parched land, and broken houses. It looked like nothing had grown there for years. Then I saw a child, who was wandering hopelessly around. He was crying. I heard him say “Who will take care of me? Who will give me safety and protection?” I looked around, but there was no one. The scene changed, and I saw God's people. I called to them - “Come and help this lost child.” But they looked puzzled. “What lost child?” they asked. “We see no lost child.”

Many people have read and heard this picture now, as I have been speaking about it. But many also ask “What’s all this about? I don’t understand.”

Understanding, believing in and working in the gateways is not easy. This is not a theology often taught. Many have listened, and wondered what it is all about! But enough people have felt led to reflect on the gateway material to make me believe that this is an understanding which is useful to intercessors. It gives us a framework within which we can pray for action. If “Gateways” does nothing else but encourage prayer for nations then it has its place. But I think it takes us further, giving us some understanding about what is going on, and a direction in which to pray.

So, what does a picture like the one from Istanbul do for us? What difference does it make? In fact, what is it all about? Before I try and answer these questions, there are a few principles which we have to understand:-

* **Gateways pictures.** The gateways are a pictorial representation of what is happening spiritually. In a way, they are illustrations to us, almost parables. Perhaps by looking at them we can discover what we need to know.

***Gateways help us pray.** The church is weak in this area, and individual members often feel overwhelmed by calls to national prayer. Gateways give a foundation, a place for our feet.

***Gateways help us pray specifically into situations.** Not only is this spiritually effective, but it is confidence building, as we see minute changes as a result of our specific prayer.

So, back to Istanbul: Let’s put more detail into the picture. The lost child suggests that:-

*Something has gone wrong in the spiritual world. Children are not meant to be lost.

* The child needs help – and knows it.

* God’s people are involved, even if their involvement is negative.

I believe God is trying to speak a message to his people, both in Turkey and the wider church family. He is able to speak it through the “gateway” - a place in the

spiritual world where it possible for us to access his voice and heart in a powerful way ,and to spiritually see, by pictures and impressions, what he is trying to say. This picture has helped a number of people pray much more specifically for the church in Turkey, and for Turkey itself. I think this is the whole purpose of the gateways experience. It suggests that there are various places in the world where it is easier to hear from the Lord. In these places - gateways - he shares by picture and impression, and we respond by praying in a specific way for what he shares.

Is there really a child somewhere in the heavenly places in the Istanbul gateway, or is this a pictorial explanation of an emotional experience? I think this is the wrong question. The “child” is as much there as is Gabriel in Daniel’s vision, Jesus on Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah, and Paul’s vision of Jesus at Corinth. These “pictures” all serve a similar function - to give us a framework for prayer, points of reference and a place to put our feet in an often confusing spiritual environment.

Riga.

*** Some situations are complex**

“I saw huge columns of fire shooting up into the air. In the columns I saw the word “freedom”. But a strong wave came, and it pulled the fire down. The hope of freedom grew smaller. Then the Lord spoke to me:-

“Who will guard the fire?

Who will turn the wave away, so that the light of the fire can illuminate the lands around? The enemy hates this land, and has tried to destroy the fire again and again. He wants it extinguished for good, so that it is not spread to other lands. Who will guard it, so that it can burn on down the generations?”

While I was reflecting on this, suddenly I was high up in the fire, and I looked across the Baltic, and across Russia. Everywhere I looked, I saw children – young children – crying. They were lost, and crying for help, for hope, for love. I heard their voices, crying “Where are you? Help us.”

I was deeply distressed, and asked the Lord what this was about. He replied:-

*“The waves of pain have come, and gone. This is what they have left.
Someone must search for these lost ones, and bring them home.*

This picture disturbed me when I first saw it, and it still disturbs me today. What is it saying?

First part:

*Freedom is the desire of Riga, but it never stays fixed.

* The enemy wants to destroy this freedom.

*Who will guard the fire?

This has been the history of Riga. This city was once a key trading centre for the Vikings, and later between Russia and the world. It has lived by its trade. Much flows through Riga, and it appears that the Lord longs for freedom to flow through this place. The enemy knows this, and tries to crush all freedom. Latvia has known this experience often enough. So – who will guard the fire? Obviously this is the task of God’s people. It’s a joyful challenge, because freedom is one of the hallmarks of the kingdom. (“You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.”) But is the church doing its job? If it isn’t, then why not? There is no answer to this in the gateway, but the emotion in the words, suggests the answer might be “no.”

Second part:

* The lost children.

Again, another emotionally charged picture. This time, the gateway is used to help us reflect on the wider picture. Riga has always looked out over Russia, and been wary of Russia as well, because sometimes things have not been so good. But it obviously hasn’t been that good for Russia either - “The waves of pain have come and gone, and this is what thy have left.” A lot to think about here, and

quite a target for prayer. Perhaps by our prayer we can begin to “bring the lost ones home.”

Riga is a much more complex gateway than Istanbul. The rising and falling of freedom, the pressure of the enemy, the state of the church, and the much wider picture of the agony of Russia - these all fuel prayer, and quite deep and urgent prayer. As I write, things are not good in Latvia. Perhaps it is time for some more people to take up the prayer burden for this place, and its suffering hinterland.

Third part:

The Riga gateway really impressed itself on me, and I began to pray into the gateway. As I was praying, this picture came to me:-

I became aware of the glory of the Lord in the heavenly places. The whole sky was filled with golden light, and I rose up through it in prayer and praise. But suddenly the scene changed, and I was standing below dark clouds. There was rain and cold wind, and no joy. This experience came to me as I was praying in the Riga gate, and looking out over Russia.

Does this add much to the original pictures, or just underline the desperate need of prayer? I don't know, but what it does show is that as we begin to pray into all of this, the Lord begins to expand our understanding of what he sees, and what he wants us to see.

It's worth noting, at this point, that the Lord uses emotional images to help us feel the gateways, as much as seeing them. Gateways need to be felt as well as seen and studied. Intercessors will understand and appreciate this. The Lord uses the image of lost children a great deal. That's because we all understand the pain of that situation. No one likes to see a child lost, and as we see it in the gateways, it moves our emotions, and opens our hearts to prayer.

Armenia

* Praying with our heart

Armenia is a very different kind of gateway from Istanbul and Riga:-

There is a very deep wound in the soul of this land. This was the first nation to respond to the Lord's new order. The enemy has hated it ever since, and taken revenge. Now the land is small, broken and full of pain. It is in danger from every side. Like a child, it is beaten and beaten again.

Yet the glory is still in the soul of this nation. It is faint but not extinguished. The land was to be a light to the nations around. The Lord has not forgotten this. I saw a hand reach down, and take the child. I heard the Lord speak. "I have not forgotten you."

Istanbul and Riga were gateways with clear pictures attached, which help us into some understanding. Armenia, however, is a totally different kind of picture – an emotional one. Here is a quote from material which is to be found later in this booklet:-

The environment of the gateways is emotional. The pictures are emotional, and the battle is fought out for the heart and soul of the intercessor. The enemy wants to overcome us with emotion. We are not used to this. Most of us have been taught the spiritual weapons of Ephesians 6, which are very practical and earthy. Long may they last, but they are less effective when the battle is for our emotions. Looking at Gethsemane, we see the power of an emotional battle, and how a deep emotional response is called for, if we are to endure and triumph.

Armenia is very much an emotional gateway. What is it saying to us?

*We can understand the present by looking to the past.

Armenia was the first nation to accept Christianity, and has held on to it tenaciously ever since. This has attracted the aggression of the enemy, who obviously hasn't appreciated Armenia's commitment. The enemy has attacked the nation, and history shows the pain which this has made for the nation – and continues to do so. The child appears again, and this time the image is very vivid. The child has been beaten again and again, and so has Armenia.

*Not worthless.

Nations which have been beaten down often have low self-esteem. But the Lord doesn't allow this for Armenia. He reminds the nation of how much he loves them – *“Yet the glory is still in the soul of this nation. It is faint but not extinguished. The land was to be a light to the nations around.”* Not only does he love, but he longs to heal and to use Armenia for the blessing of the Caucasus - and how much the nations of the Caucasus need encouragement and blessing.

The Armenia gateway is a very good example of how these things strike our hearts. This gateway touched me very deeply, but it would because I have a great passion for the Caucasus. It immediately helped me see how to pray. But it didn't strike a friend of mine. He thought it was good, but Istanbul captured his heart and prayers. Those who enter the gateway area of ministry find that some are attracted to this, and some to that. Each, however, finds prayer sharpened and focused in a way they have not known before.

Singapore and Malaysia

*** Praying for more than one nation is sometimes necessary**

Gateways do not function in isolation, but they overlap, affect each other, and affect the overall spiritual environment everywhere. We will come back to this

when we study Jerusalem, but Malaysia and Singapore provide a good insight into the overlapping of gateways:-

This gateway (Singapore) functions, but not very well. Strong currents swirl around it, from Malaysia on one hand, and from wealth and power on the other. My first impression in this gateway is of pride and arrogance. This gateway is not broken, but damaged, struggling against the wealth, power and pride of Singapore. It is also under threat from a powerful wave sweeping down from Malaysia. The wave has already gathered, and I see it is full of broken bits of buildings. These represent the many thrusts against God's people which have weakened and threatened them. This is the consequence of the weakness and failure of this gateway. I saw that around this gateway, the enemy was slowly building a hedge of thorns and briars. He is moving against this gateway, and he must have some reason for thinking that he had the prospect of success.

We could look at these two gateways separately, but of more interest to us is the overlap. Singapore is already struggling as a gateway. Gateways grow stronger when used, and weaker when ignored. The gateway in Singapore is struggling, and the enemy, knowing this, takes his opportunity to begin planning destruction. I know that the Church in Singapore has been very powerful. It would be easy to say “How can you say this when the church is apparently strong?” But if we take the Gateway picture seriously – if we look down from the heavenlies – then we see that the church is failing in its gateway prayer ministry, and the enemy is planning fresh attacks.

“He (the enemy) was slowly building a hedge of thorns and briars. He is moving against this gateway, and he must have some reason for thinking that he had the prospect of success.”

But at the same time as attacking directly, he is building up a tidal wave of pressure from Malaysia, to break the church in Singapore, and to destroy the gateway:-

“It is also under threat from a powerful wave sweeping down from Malaysia. The wave has already gathered, and I see it is full of broken bits of buildings. These

represent the many thrusts against God's people which have weakened and threatened God's people.

Of course, if the gateway picture is wrong, then we have nothing to fear. But if it is right, it says hard things about the church, and issues a profound warning of the dangers ahead. These powerful waves may take many centuries to build up, but if they are set free, they can cause great spiritual destruction. Istanbul stands as a powerful warning. When the tidal wave broke over it, most of Christian witness was wiped out in Turkey, Syria and the Middle East. (See the teaching on “waves” in the original material.)

Panama

*** Praying in the crossroads is vital**

Panama is, in many ways, a parallel to Istanbul. It stands at the crossover of North and South America, Pacific and Atlantic. What the Lord says in such places has profound effects - probably more than any individual gateway, with the exception of Jerusalem. Panama is obviously a gateway. The “bridge of the Americas” links north and south, while the canal links East and West. Praying into such places is vital, because such prayer can have a very wide effect. Looking back over my travels, here is the vision I had for Panama. I think it is a picture of the gateway:-

I was standing in Panama City, and I saw a great figure towering over the landscape – a beautiful figure, which I sensed was Jesus. He was pointing to the north, to the south, and to the east and to the west. “Lord” I said “What do you want?”

Immediately, I saw the vision again. But this time thousands of hands were reaching up to Jesus, from all over Central America, and many voices crying out in joy. It was the most moving experience. Then the Lord spoke to me

*“Look to the North, the south, the East and the West.
What do you see?”
Clouds.*

*“The clouds are breaking.
My glory is beginning to shine.
But there is still far to go.
Much to be done before I can reveal my fullness.
What must you do?
“I must go and proclaim
“Glory! Glory! Glory!”*

It is interesting that this gateway is explained and expanded by an experience from a different time. I’m sure that I am only getting a glimpse of things, and that others, as well as myself, will get additional insight as we pray into the gateways. We should not be afraid of this. Gateways are on the move all the time, and many of us will get different insights.

Chile /Argentina

*** Praying with limited information. More will come.**

Sometimes, we have to accept that we don’t get the whole picture – sometimes very little. Look at these two gateways - Chile and Argentina:-

Chile: *The Lord began to speak to me about Chile. The words “Fallen! Fallen!” pushed themselves into my mind. A great sorrow filled my spirit. What has fallen? How has it fallen? Why has it fallen? I saw a child, standing alone in the dark. It was not afraid, because it had given up all hope. It was a wasted child - it spoke of wasted hopes, wasted potential, wasted joy, wasted love.*

Argentina: *I saw a mother desperately looking for her children. I began to understand that this refers to a gateway and a gateway where there is lostness. This lostness is in the gateway of Argentina.*

Both these pictures are very highly emotionally charged - and I felt them very profoundly. But neither is very clear, unlike some other gateways which are very clear. I think we have to accept this, and wait for the deeper understandings

which will come later. These two gateways allow us to say, "We don't know." There's nothing wrong in the spiritual world with such uncertainty. Daniel was certainly puzzled by the lack of answer to his prayers, until Gabriel gave him the explanation. We will have to wait - Habakkuk would have understood. ("I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us." Hab.3:16) Of course, if anyone is touched to pray for either of these countries, everything will be very clear.

Jerusalem

*** A challenge to our lifestyle**

The Jerusalem gateway is the gateway par excellence. So much of what has happened, and is happening in the spiritual world passes through Jerusalem, so it is little wonder that it is a very key place. I still have much to learn about this gateway, but we can see key features in the pictures:-

*** Jerusalem is central, which is what we would expect.**

"This is the gateway of the world.

Here, I reign.

Nothing moves through here without my command.

Here, my sovereignty is supreme.

Here I hold the creation in my hand.

When I speak, it is done."

*** There is a great challenge to the quality of our lives.**

But then I became aware that I was entering the Jerusalem gateway, which was a place of intense holiness - holiness which has been here for thousands of years. I was suddenly aware of the majesty and glory of the Lord in a very powerful way.

This is an interesting development. It alerts us to the fact that who we are and how we live our Christian lives will be challenged and purified in the gateways. The gateway experience is not just a "looking on" experience, but a life changing one. We have to allow the Lord to make us "holy."

“Holy” (Gk: “hagios”) has big implications for our lifestyles. Meaning “set apart for God’s use”, it means that our whole life must be of the quality which makes us able to serve the Lord. We have to lay aside all the things of the world, and by sacrificial living, be able to enter and stand in the presence of the living God. We have no need to be afraid of holiness. Ultimately, our spiritual relationship is guaranteed by the blood of Jesus. But what God is looking for are the hallmarks of holiness in our lives – those changes which are made possible by the blood, and which make us, slowly but surely, into the image of Jesus.

Gateways and sacrificial living go hand in hand. All intercessors know this. It is not possible to live in deliberate sin, and stand in the presence of the living God, to know his mind and will. But nor is it possible to have any gateway or intercessory ministry without the willingness to lay down our lives, whatever that may mean for us, so that we can intercede.

Being made holy is painful and costly. It’s best to know this at the beginning, then we won’t complain when it is tough. If we are not prepared for the cost of holiness, it’s better to leave this ministry alone.

*** The enemy attacks with fervour:-**

I saw storms raging everywhere – violent storms. The Lord spoke:-

“The enemy seeks to destroy.

He has been a destroyer from the beginning.”

The enemy knows that Jerusalem marks the site of his great defeat. Since that day, he has attacked the physical Jerusalem over and over again. He is still attacking it. So it’s natural to see the violence of the enemy from this gateway. The enemy is a loser, but a dangerous one. We need to clothe ourselves hourly with the blood of Jesus. Incidentally, the holier we become, the more we too will draw his attacks against ourselves. Tough work this gateway stuff isn’t it!

*** The Lord works for his people and his creation**

In the gateway, I saw light reaching out into the dark places of the spiritual world. Wherever it shone, it showed up the darkness. Its function was to confront the enemy, to confront the darkness, and show who was the Victor and who was the vanquished.

Ultimately, victory will flow from the Jerusalem gateway. I suspect that not many of us reading this are surprised to read this truth.

This is a brief look at how Gateways work. What is their ultimate function? To help us pray for the nations. Here is a topical example of how I think it works. Here is what I felt when I looked into Ecuador:

“I was overwhelmed with sorrow - not mine but the Lords. Just as yesterday I was feeling his compassion, so today his sorrow. It’s strange - I don’t feel it, yet I sense it. This sorrow is pouring onto Ecuador. But it’s a sorrow of love, not of sadness. I know that doesn’t look quite right. I can explain it better than I can write it.”

So Ecuador is in a good position – or is it? The latest news from Ecuador shows a nation in turmoil, which reflects just what I was seeing in the gateway. The Lord’s compassion was like a great lake, but it was held back by a dam of some sort. Beyond the dam lay Ecuador. So what would we say to God’s people in Ecuador today? God is longing to bless, and he has enormous blessings for you. But the turmoil of your land - the uncertainties, the lack of expectation –all these hinder the blessing. The Church can pray with confidence into the blessing of God, but also has to pray for the healing and restoration of the Nation, before this can happen. A huge responsibility and privilege rests with God’s people. This burden must be taken up.

I think that if I were an Ecuadorian Christian, this would help me, and that’s why I believe Gateways has a contribution to make to God’s people in the world

Part 2: Power in the Gateways.

Since the gateway ministry started, we have never faced the question of why we are seeing these things, and what we can do about what we see. The gateways are a pictorial representation of what is happening spiritually. In a way, they are illustrations to us, almost parables. If we are going to try and discover the power available to us, then we have to understand what we are up against. Let's see if the various gateway revelations can help us discern the environment.

What is the spiritual background of the gateways?

1. It's an emotional environment. (Istanbul, Latvia, Armenia.)

We have already looked at this issue, especially in relation to Istanbul, Latvia and Armenia. I am not going to repeat what was said previously, except this paragraph:-

“Just a brief look at these gateways shows us the emotional struggle and turmoil which is in each one. This is the background, and because of the highly charged emotional framework, the enemy works hard to twist our emotions, so that we feel despair, hopelessness, bewilderment, and as a consequence don't get to the heart of the gateway. Conversely, the Lord is trying to touch us emotionally so that we do get to the heart of the gateway. Quite a battlefield! Underneath all this emotional turmoil, the enemy is seeking to destroy. He is a destroyer. (John 10:10). It's war to the death. Survival is at stake.

2. We can't stand still or fall asleep. (The waves)

One of the features of the gateway scene is that there is movement everywhere. We are going to have to acquire what we look for in professional footballers – fast feet! That was what impressed me with the “waves” picture, which begins with the “Rock”:-

I was standing in a vast open space. All around me, on the horizon were different sorts of weather – storms, lightning, snow, rain, sun. It was bewildering. Then I realised I was standing on a rock in the middle of a great ocean. Huge waves came from different directions, rushing past me to break on some distant shore. The Lord spoke to me:-

“You could easily prophecy about each of these waves couldn’t you prophet? Where they are going, what their intention is, what they bring?” “Of course Lord” I replied. “That’s what you have equipped me to do.”

On rolled these mighty waves, coming from different directions, rushing past me. I began to reflect on what I was seeing. Is this what a gateway looks like in the heavenlies? If so, do we have any effect on the waves? Or can we? Or are we supposed to – or is our job to see them, identify them, and warn or encourage those to whom they are heading?

The waves come and go all the time and we are facing an enemy that never sleeps, so we had better plan for “fast feet.” The same sense of movement comes from the Jerusalem gateway. I’ve been to this gateway twice, and it is truly powerful and awesome. I have much more to learn there. Here is the “Storm” picture from the Jerusalem gateway:-

*I saw storms raging everywhere – violent storms. The Lord spoke:-
“The enemy seeks to destroy.
He has been a destroyer from the beginning.”*

Every destruction has brought a great wave of pain to the heart of God – not just the pain of feeling it, but of knowing that because of his commitment to us, he cannot just sweep it aside. He spoke again:-

“I feel the pains of my creation, but when they abandon me, they move outside of my protection. In that darkness there is great pain – for them and for me.”

3. “Binding.” (Cambodia)

“Binding” is a big issue in the Bible. The story of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1-24) has given rise to the Akedah theology, in which both Jews, Christians and Muslims have been involved. Satan continues to try and bind in the gateways. He wants to bind so that he can control. Let’s look at an example:-

Cambodia:

The Lord took me into the gateway of Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia. As I looked down, I saw below me a cloud. But not a normal cloud. This one was made up of what looked like ropes or cords. Each one was very tight, and they were all twisted together. There seemed to be so much anger and spite in this cloud. As I looked through it, I saw millions of people, trying to live under the shadow of this anxiety and tension. There seemed to be little freedom.

Satan likes to bind. He bound Legion, and he thought he had bound Jesus. He tries to bind the church, and in the gateways we can see that he likes to dominate and bind people up, so that they cannot move, and are full of despair. We must be aware of this tendency for Satan to chain, watch out for our own lives, and stand in this truth - “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

Where is our power – what can we do?

Our power is to be found in spiritual experiences and skills. Here are three of them:-

1. We must become aware.

Joshua was unable to understand why he had lost the battle against Ai, until the Lord revealed Aachen’s sin. (Joshua 7: 1-10) Only when Joshua became aware did he know what action to take. Jesus had a similar thought:- **“But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.”**

(Matt 24:43) Gateways give us a way to become aware of what is happening, and how we should pray.

2. We must exercise “deesis.”

We can pray, which should be very obvious to us, but often we don’t pray as we should. So how do we pray?

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.(Eph 6:18) There are 2 Greek words here:-

“proseuche”, which means, basically, “prayer addressed to God.”

“deesis”, which has a much stronger sense of pleading for things before God - in fact just what an intercessor does. Abraham, Amos and Jesus all used “deesis” prayer, with great effect. We have the power to do the same.

3. We must activate the weapons we have.

* We have to fight and defeat the enemy – we must “overcome” (Romans 8:37) This is the Greek verb *“nikao”* which means “to triumph totally - to defeat, take the land and rule.”

* Break the chains. In the story of Legion, the possessed man could break the physical chains himself, but only the power of God could break the demoniac chains which were binding him. We have the power to break every stronghold - we had better get on with it!

*Release the power of the Spirit. At Ephesus (Acts 19) when the Spirit was released, amazing things happened. We have the same potential in us.

“When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to

fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”

* We must stand in the gap and resist in the armour.

I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.”(Exek.20:30)

Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.(Ephesians 6:11)

Part 3: Types of prayer

I have learnt that there are different ways of praying in the gateways, and different circumstances need a different approach. Here are some I have been using, and they reflect and undergird some of the things I have already written and experienced.

Heart prayer: Hannah

All prayer comes from the heart. But for some, there is a deep move of the emotions in prayer. This is how it was for Hannah:-

In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. And she made a vow, saying, “O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, “How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine.” “Not so, my lord,” Hannah replied, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out

my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." She said, "May your servant find favour in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. *(1 Sam 1:10-18)*

This kind of prayer is:

* **Close to the heart of God.** Our God is an emotional God, who knows what it is to feel prayer. Look at these verses:-

"How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I treat you like Admah?
How can I make you like Zeboiim?
My heart is changed within me;
all my compassion is aroused." *(Hosea 11:8)*

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. *(Matt 9:35-36)*

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." *(Matt 26:36-38)*

* **Moves the heart of God.** As he sees our commitment to prayer, pouring from our heart, so he is moved to hear and respond. He says to us through the prophet Jeremiah: - **"Call to me and I will answer you."** (Jer. 33:3) We take this too simply. We do not just "call", we have to call with passion, with compassion, and with heartfelt sighs. We have to do as Apostle Paul teaches: - **"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but**

the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”
(Rom 8:26)

*** Very costly.**

If we pray from the heart, then it will be very costly. The Apostle Paul found it so, and we should reflect on this verse:-

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.” (2 Tim 4:6)

Challenge prayer. Elijah

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.” (1 Kings 18:36-37)

When Elijah prayed his great prayer, what was he really doing? Was he lacking faith, or did he think that God needed to be made to hear? What he was really doing was challenging faith - challenging the people to respond in faith to the move of the spirit which was to come, and challenging the principalities and powers to accept the absolute sovereignty of God.

We find the same in the commands of Jesus:-

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (Mark 4:39)

Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” (John 11:43-44)

Such prayer, when inspired by the Spirit, releases the power of God. We have to be moved by the Spirit to pray like this - it must not come from our selfish hearts.

Crisis prayer. Acts 12

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. (Acts 12:5)

Sometimes we have to stop what we are doing, and fight for a particular situation, with commitment and urgency. That is what happened in Acts 12. Peter was in prison, with a very real prospect of being executed. So the church gathered to pray, with concern, urgency and the need for God to act. Sometimes only this passionate and urgent prayer can rescue a situation. The call to pray in this way is never convenient - it comes in a crisis, it is inconvenient and costly. But even so, it has to be done.

Warfare prayer. Gethsemane.

Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke 22:39-44)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:10-12)

Prayer is war! We are seeking the mind of God, and seeking to release the purposes of God. The enemy is opposed. Result - war. We see this at different levels

* **Gethsemane.** Here the war revolves around the human spirit. The enemy tries to get self to rule, but Jesus fought to let the will of God rule. This is a battle we have to fight daily, and one we have to win.

* **Prince of Persia.** Here we see how the enemy seeks to obstruct the prayers of man, and the responses of God. We have to learn to wait in strength and power, until God answers. This is hard to do.

* **Methodia.** The enemy has a strategy to obstruct us. He has method, (Gk “methodia”), and he will use every scheme and strategy against us

We have to use the weapons at our disposal:

* We have to bind the strong man. (Mark 3:27)

* Use the blood of Jesus. (See “Releasing the power of the blood” on the lamps download page.)

* We have divine power to pull down strongholds. (2 Cor 10:10)

* We have to use the armour of Ephesians 6.

Believing/faith/risk prayer.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It's a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.” “Lord, if it's you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” (Matt 14: 22-33)

Peter's request was high risk. But faith was high in him, so he found the courage to take an amazing step of faith. Sometimes, that's how it has to be in prayer. Moments come when we know that a high risk prayer is needed, and faith rises in us to make such a prayer.

At these moments, the enemy will sow doubt in the mind. He will try to convince us that we cannot do what faith is asking us to do. We have to take hold of this attack, and see it as an incentive to do exactly what faith is demanding. If the enemy is trying to stop us, we can be confident that it is a prayer he does not want to hear. Of course it is a very big risk. We may get it wrong - but on the other hand we may get it right! Faith is always like this - we have to take the prayer risk and leave the consequences to God.

Watchman prayer. Habakkuk:

**I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled.
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity
to come on the nation invading us.**

**Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,

yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Saviour. (Hab 3:16-18)**

There are times when we are called on to watch in prayer. This kind of prayer has been devalued in our time. Today, God's people think only of action. Yet waiting is

a powerful spiritual type of prayer. It generates an atmosphere of expectancy, in which the spirit can move. It is an attitude of confidence and joy - "God will do it, and I am ready to see what God wants to do." Most of all, it terrifies the enemy. He sees us waiting, and he knows that something is going to happen. But he doesn't know what. This sows panic, and forces him to divide his forces.

The great joy of this type of prayer is that we can do it any when, anywhere. Don't let's ever say "I'm just waiting." Let's always say "I am just waiting for God to move."

Sacrificial prayer: Shadrach

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. (Dan 3:16-18)

We easily lose sight of the truth that prayer is sacrificial. It's not just a question of sacrificing time and effort. More it is the sacrificial lifestyle which intercessory prayer demands of us. Our daily prayers are relatively easy. Praying at a deep intercessory level is very costly. The enemy will attack us, our health, our hopes, our families, our finances - the list is endless. We have to have the courage of Shadrach, and say "I knew that it would cost me when I committed to pray. I will pay the price." Easy to write, but not so easy to live.

Generational prayer. Hebrews 11

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.(Hebrews 11:39)

We must not make the mistake of praying just for this generation. We have to believe that some of our prayers will be answered in the next generations. We have to take all our prayers, and throw them down the ages, knowing that, with God, no prayer is wasted.

Trying to make sense of this has not been easy, but it becomes clearer as we try to see the implications for what we are seeing for the people we are seeing them for.